

# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE FIELD NOTES

JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER ♦ MAY 2014



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## Welcome to the General Land Office



Welcome to the spring 2014 edition of *Field Notes*, a newsletter from the state's oldest and most diverse agency—the Texas General Land Office.

Following on the heels of the hugely successful exhibit of William Barret Travis' "Victory or Death" letter at the Alamo comes another eye-opener—"Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo." This free exhibit opened at the Alamo in February and will remain open until June 6.

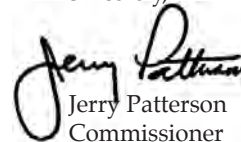
"Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo" features more than 30 original documents, maps and cultural artifacts, telling the story of the Tejanos defenders during the Battle of the Alamo. These items were pulled from the archival collections of the General Land Office and the Alamo, as well as other sources.

There's also a story inside about a much more recent event: the oil spill that closed the Houston Ship Channel for days. As the lead state agency for preventing and responding to oil spills, the Land Office played a huge role in successfully containing the sticky mess.

The Land Office also handles a different kind of coastal mess in the form of beach litter, which we try to reduce through our annual "Treasures of the Texas Coast Children's Art Contest." An article inside has details on this year's grand prize winner. And be sure to read about the new spokesman for our Veterans Land Board benefits programs, Texas actor Barry Corbin.

Thanks for taking time to learn about the General Land Office and its hard-working people. If you have any questions, please refer to the last page where you'll find contact information for each department at the agency.

Sincerely,

  
Jerry Patterson  
Commissioner

## Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo

Due largely to popular culture from a bygone era, the Battle of the Alamo is often depicted as a racial conflict between Anglos and Hispanics. But, of course, the truth is more revealing.

This spring the story of the Alamo siege and battle is cast in a new light. For the first time, visitors can examine the role of Tejanos in defending the Alamo and helping to forge not only a nation but a unique cultural identity.

*Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo* – which opened on Feb. 21 and closes on June 6 – brings the story of the Alamo's Tejano defenders to life. Visitors will stand in the Shrine of Texas Liberty and hear the words of several Tejanos and Tejanas who were eyewitnesses to history. Inside the sacristy, visitors will learn how the Tejano women and children huddled in the protection of its thick

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# Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo

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walls to survive the siege.

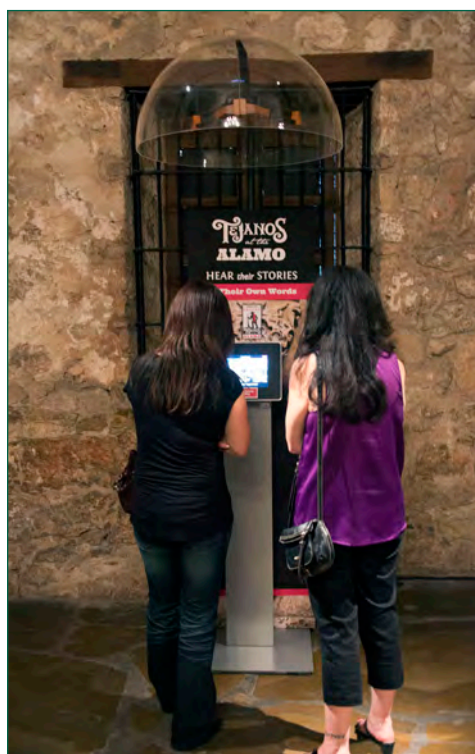
"The whole idea here is to tell a vital part of the story that's been lost over all these years," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. "This wasn't a battle between Texans and Mexicans – this was a battle for liberty. They were fighting for liberty."

*Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo* is the third in a series of exhibits at the Shrine sponsored by the Alamo and the General Land Office. The exhibit is ambitious, seeking to not only honor the Tejano Alamo defenders, but to portray them as real people using details from their own writings, rare and historic documents and personal mementos. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

A highlight of the exhibit is an interactive display that allows visitors to hear the words of many of the Tejanos that once echoed throughout the Alamo church. Visitors will hear descriptions of the bloodshed and accounts of the heroic activities of the Texans and Tejanos who were there, all while viewing historical portraits and other images. Grammy-award winning Tejano superstar Ruben "El Gato Negro" Ramos is among those who provided voice talent for the recordings.

Patterson, the state's steward of the Alamo, has long been an advocate for expanding the study of Texas history to include Native Americans and Tejanos, or Texans of Hispanic heritage. This exhibit is the second of two that highlight the Hispanic contribution to Texas and the Alamo.

"With immigration on the forefront of public discussion, it's important to remember that Texas began as a part of the Spanish Empire ruled from Mexico," Patterson said. "This is the whole story of the Alamo. While John Wayne made a movie about the Alamo that largely focused on the Anglo defenders Crockett, Bowie and Travis, it's important to remember the Tejano defenders who sacrificed their lives for Texas freedom, too."



Visitors listen to the words of Tejanos who served at the Alamo.

Eight Tejano defenders of the Alamo gave their lives in the battle: Juan Abamillo, Juan Antonio Badillo, Carlos Espalier, Jose Maria Esparza, Antonio Fuentes, Damacio Jimenez, Jose Toribio Losoya and Andres Nava. There were also Tejano combatants who survived, or were sent out before the final attack on March 6. Those featured in this exhibit are Andres Barcenas, Anselmo Bergara, Antonio Cruz y Arocha, Alexandro de la Garza, Brigido Guerrero and Juan Seguin.



A display case holds some of the 30 original documents, maps and cultural artifacts on display until June 6 at the *Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo* exhibit.

There were also many Tejanas, or Tejano women, who sought refuge within the sacristy of the Alamo church. Those women were Gertrudis Navarro, Juana Navarro Perez Alsbury, Ana Salazar Castro de Esparza, Petra Gonzales, Mariá Francisca Curvier Losoya Juana Francisca Losoya Melton, Victoriana de Salinas, Trinidad Saucedo and Andrea Castanon Villanueva, better known as Madam Candelaria. With the women were nine children: Enrique Esparza, Manuel Esparza, Francisco Esparza, Maria de Jesus Castro Esparza, Juan Losoya, Alejo Perez, Jr. and three daughters of Victoriana de Salinas.

*Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo* features over 30 original documents, maps, and cultural artifacts, telling the story of the Tejano defenders during the epic battle.

The items on display inside the Shrine were pulled from the archival collections of the Land Office, the Alamo, the Alamo Research Center, the Briscoe Center for American History and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The fragile maps, documents and cultural artifacts provide fascinating and personal insights on the Tejano men, women and children who gave their lives, or witnessed the mythic birth of Texas.

Documents from Archives and Records correct a long-standing historical error regarding one Tejana in particular. Mariá Francisca Curvier Losoya, long misidentified in various publications for more than a century, emerges from the historical shadows to receive full and accurate public recognition as the widow of an Alamo defender and a survivor of the massacre. This was made possible by the discovery of primary source evidence: an 1861 affidavit filed as part of a land grant application in Archives and Records.

Dr. Bruce Winders, Chief Historian at the Alamo, noted that such a discovery "shows that there is so much out there waiting to be found and incorporated into the historical narrative" of the Alamo, and the scholarship upon which the exhibit has been built "represents a maturing of the field of Alamo research."

The exhibit closes on June 6, commemorating Juan Seguin and his fellow Tejano troops taking back possession of San Antonio from the Mexican army.

*Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo* will be open to the public seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. until June 6. As always, the "Shrine of Texas Liberty" is open to visitors free of charge. Visitors are asked to be silent and respectful when viewing the documents and no photography will be allowed. For more information on the Alamo, please visit [www.thealamo.org](http://www.thealamo.org).



# First Annual Expedition Cleanup

The Padre Island National Seashore recently played host to the first-ever Adopt-A-Beach Expedition, a competition that rewarded volunteers with prizes in exchange for trash.

A total of eight teams, comprised of four members each, competed for prizes collecting the most amount of trash in various categories. Texas General Land Office staffers drove each team to its designated stretch of the four-wheel drive beach area on the National Seashore.

After scouring the beaches for four hours, members of Team Eight—Erika and Kayleigh Schweickardt of San Antonio and Edward and Rebekah Stommel of Corpus Christi—won a \$50 gift certificate to Waterstreet Restaurants for picking up the most trash bags. Members of Team Seven—Sara Keefer, Amanda Stephens, Justin Quintanilla and Christian Ferris, all of Corpus Christi—won passes to the *USS Lexington* for collecting the most bottles and cans. Members of Team Four—Summer Hays and Beth Wilson of Corpus Christi and Juan and Nina Madrano of Edinburg—found the most rope, earning them free passes to the Texas State Aquarium. And Team Five—David and Jaelene Boyce of Alaska and Stacy and Lynell Jenkins of Waco—found the most shoes and items of clothing, netting them four passes to Schlitterbahn Water Parks. Crystal Wilson, of Corpus Christi, won a Yeti Cooler in a post contest drawing.

The generosity of our sponsors made the event a huge success. We'd like to thank Waterstreet Restaurants, *USS Lexington*, Texas State Aquarium, Yeti Coolers and Schlitterbahn Waterparks for their continued support of our mission to keep Texas beaches clean and pristine.



Contestants scramble to gather beach litter.



Participants along with GLO and PINS staff members pose for a group photo after the cleanup.



Quite a haul of trash was collected.

## About Commissioner Jerry Patterson

Jerry Patterson was born in Houston, Texas on November 15, 1946. He graduated from Texas A&M, Class of 1969 and received his commission in the United States Marine Corps. Volunteering for duty in Vietnam in 1972, Patterson was later designated as a Naval Flight Officer and served in Marine fighter squadrons until his retirement from the Marine Corps Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1993.

Five consecutive generations of Patterson's family have served our nation in time of war.

As state senator for District 11 (Harris, Galveston, Brazoria), Patterson's major legislative successes include passage of the historic concealed handgun law, a constitutional amendment allowing home equity lending, the state coastal management plan and the creation of the Texas State Veterans Home Program. A tireless advocate for his fellow veterans, he chaired

the first Veterans Affairs committee in the Texas Senate.

Since his election as Texas Land Commissioner in 2002, Patterson has modernized and revitalized the Texas General Land Office, the oldest agency in Texas. He has diversified and increased the Permanent School Fund, made Texas a renewable energy leader, protected state lands and overseen the greatest expansion of veterans benefits since World War II.

Jerry resides in Austin and has four children: twins Samantha and Cole, born in 2004, and Emily and Travis. His daughter Emily is an attorney working in Kosovo for an agency funded, in part, by the U.S. State Department. His son Travis is a graduate of Texas A&M, where he was commissioned as a Marine Lieutenant. Travis recently returned from serving his 2nd tour of duty in Iraq as a U.S. Marine attack helicopter pilot.

# Response to Recent Oil Spill Staves Off Environmental Catastrophe



Responders work hard to contain the spill.

**T**exas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson has always had confidence in the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division of the Texas General Land Office. His faith was put to the test on March 22, when a barge hauling fuel oil collided with a merchant ship in the Houston Ship Channel, spilling 168,000 gallons of sticky oil into Galveston Bay.

The Land Office and U.S. Coast Guard quickly implemented response plans that have been tested and honed for more than 20 years. Certified private oil spill responders were contracted and prepositioned response equipment was used to contain and clean up the oil.

"In Texas, we're ready," Patterson said. "I think the rest of the nation could learn a few lessons from us when it comes to planning ahead and preparing for oil spills."

Ultimately, some 800 personnel were involved, from highly trained individuals directing operations and operating equipment, to workers using rakes and shovels to remove oil and contaminated material from Texas beaches.

"This is where all our advance plans, our drills and our preparations really pay off," Patterson said.

The Texas Automated Buoy System—the first and only real-time offshore oil spill tracking system—continuously reported on conditions affecting the movement of the oil, such as surface currents and wind speed. Begun by the Land Office in 1995, the system

worked beautifully, predicting when and where oil would make landfall and allowing an effective response and efficient use of resources.

When the spill threatened environmentally sensitive Matagorda Bay, prepositioned

protective boom and other equipment were used to protect the bay—just as planned many years ago. While oil made landfall on Matagorda, Mustang and Padre islands, it was quickly spotted and removed.

Sadly, some of the oil polluted wetlands near the spill site at the Texas City Dike, resulting in oiled wildlife, primarily birds. Most of the oiled birds found were already dead, but dozens were still alive. Wildlife rehabilitation trailers—fully stocked and prepositioned at critical wildlife habitat along the Texas coast—were put into action to save the birds. Trained volunteers performed much of the gentle cleaning required to remove oil from stressed birds.

The timely and effective response to the spill did not go unnoticed. An editorial in the Galveston Daily News praised it as a "textbook reply."

With more than 1.2 billion barrels of oil passing through Texas ports each year, the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division works hard to keep oil out of Texas waters. This requires cooperation with the ports, industrial plants and petroleum refineries along the Gulf Coast, as well as commercial shrimpers, fishermen and others who work and play on the water. The division responds to some 900 reported oil spills each year and works closely with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Funded by a one and one-third cents-per-barrel fee on crude oil loaded or off-loaded in Texas ports, the Oil Spill division maintains five field offices along the coast.

Coincidentally, the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division was created in response to the Exxon Valdez spill, which occurred almost exactly 25 years before the March 22 spill.

If you see tarballs on the beach or a fuel or oil spill in Texas coastal waters, please call the Texas General Land Office oil spill reporting toll-free number at 1-800-832-8224.



Commissioner Patterson answers questions during a media briefing in Texas City.



This little guy received a lot of attention after getting cleaned up.

## Did you know?

An 1849 map of Texas that sold for \$149,000 recently was created at the Texas General Land Office by legendary cartographer Jacob De Cordova.



# Barry Corbin New Voice for Texas VLB



Texas native Barry Corbin as the wealthy former astronaut Maurice Minnifield in “Northern Exposure.”

As the new spokesman for the Texas Veterans Land Board, Texas-born and -bred actor Barry Corbin has a face most everyone will recognize, even if they don’t know his name.

With more than 100 TV and film credits and several Emmy nominations, Corbin’s success as a Hollywood character actor—with roles in movies such as “WarGames,” “Urban Cowboy” and “No Country for Old Men”—may seem like a dream come true for a kid from Lame-  
sa. But it’s Corbin’s real-life role as a member of the U.S. Marines

that helped him achieve his life-long dream: owning land in Texas.

“Here in Texas, owning land has always been a big part of being a Texan, but for veterans like me, owning land here is a dream come true,” Corbin says as he walks along a fenced pasture on a Hill Country ranch. “Right now, if you’re a Texas veteran or a member of the military, the VLB has low-interest loans up to \$100,000 with only 5 percent down. This is a great deal, just for veterans.”

Corbin, a member of the Texas Film Hall of Fame, earned his Texas veterans benefits long before starring in TV series including



From L-R: Angela Brutsche of VLB; Mark Loeffler, Dawn Efaw, David Little and Julia Ruiz of Communications; Rick Hollar, the property owner; Kristin MacBride of Communications and Barry Corbin at the ranch where the PSA was shot.

“Anger Management,” “Matlock,” “The Thorn Birds,” “M.A.S.H.,” “Dallas,” “The Closer,” “One Tree Hill” and “Northern Exposure.”

“We looked long and hard to find a Texas veteran who could really understand and appreciate our mission at the VLB—serving Texas veterans for life,” Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson said. “Barry is a Texas veteran who understands that owning land is the American dream and he was eager to help us spread the word.”

# McCrea is Meticulous About Legal’s Library & Files



Marva McCrea once had the task of indexing 1,500 archival boxes—a project that took one and a half years.

tor Barbara Jordan in 1965.

When McCrea took over Legal’s file management, she had to go through 41 archival boxes to find a single document. It turned out that none of the roughly 1,500 archival boxes had been indexed, and she got the job of correcting the problem. “That project took a year and a half,” McCrea said.

While combing through 1,500 archival boxes holding files on litigation and numerous projects, McCrea found that two held the contents of someone’s desk. It’s a good thing she found the items, as it could have ended the agency’s archiving privileges at the State Library.

After enduring such a long, tedious, detail-oriented project, it

Marva McCrea has worked in Legal Services more than 18 years, starting off as a paralegal. It wasn’t long before she was asked to update Legal’s library and manage its files—very important duties requiring someone dependable. That wasn’t a problem for McCrea, who had her own business for 35 years and worked for Sena-

seems perfectly understandable that McCrea gets irked when out-cards aren’t used by Legal staffers and books aren’t returned to their proper places. The same goes for late-arriving information or documents required to update the logs.

Those minor annoyances aside, McCrea genuinely likes her job and the people she works with—“once I’ve trained them” she adds with a smile.

The majority of McCrea’s time is spent between overseeing the library and its budget; opening, closing, updating and archiving all litigation and project files; and entering them into Logs. All this in addition to occasional research and anything else she’s needed for. “I never know what adventure is around the corner,” she says.

Once, attorneys at the Attorney General’s Office had to search Legal’s files for documents they had sent to Legal. “They couldn’t find most of them,” McCrea said. “I was so embarrassed.” A new supervisor had assigned the litigation files to the associate assistant, who didn’t check for multiple documents that were sent together by the AG’s Office. “So whatever was on top was what was entered and filed,” McCrea said. “Once I got the files back, I had to undo what had been done to recover a lot of misfiled documents. I’m very meticulous, very particular and very protective about my work.”

McCrea has come a long way and learned a lot since joining the Legal Services team. When she arrived in 1995, she had turned on a computer exactly once, while doing a Westlaw exercise in paralegal school. Now she learns something new every day.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to be working here,” she said. “I really do like what I do. I was self-employed for 35 years, and this is the only job I’ve really ever had.”

# Honey Grove Fifth-Grader Wins Art Contest

Jordan Gerling, a fifth-grader from Honey Grove Elementary in Honey Grove is the grand prize winner of the 2014 Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Treasures of the Texas Coast Children's Art Contest.

Jordan's playful treasure map captures many elements that make the Texas coast great, including seafood, sailing, fun at the beach, a cruise ship and a treasure chest. Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson selected Jordan's art from more than 4,100 entries submitted statewide.

"Jordan's included just about everything I love about the Texas coast," Patterson said. "This will look great on the cover of next year's calendar."

Jordan's image, along with 39 runners-up, will appear in the 2015 Adopt-A-Beach calendar. This year's runners-up include two sets of siblings—Trinity and Lynley Pace from Sugarland and Rachael and John Ward from Victoria. The annual competition encourages schoolchildren to learn more about the Texas coast and express what they've learned through their art. Open to grades K-6 across Texas, the contest motivates thousands of young artists each year.

Jordan's winning artwork earns him two round-trip, coach-class tickets from United Airlines to any United destination anywhere in North America, one 7-night Caribbean cruise from Royal Caribbean International departing out of Galveston, Miami or Ft. Lauderdale and a class party at Schlitterbahn Waterpark in New Braunfels. The grand prize winner's teacher, Ashley Price, also receives two round-trip, coach-class tickets from United Airlines and one 7-night Caribbean cruise courtesy of Royal Caribbean International.

Ten winners were chosen from each of four grade-level categories (K – 2nd, 3rd – 4th, 5th and 6th) for a total of 40 winners. One



Jordan Gerling's winning artwork.

grand prize winner was chosen from among the 40 finalists. All 40 winners receive a ticket to the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, two all-day passes to Schlitterbahn Waterpark in New Braunfels, a ticket to the permanent exhibit hall at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, a ticket to the Houston Zoo, a certificate of recognition and prizes from the Texas General Land Office and a calendar displaying the winning artwork. This year's contest sponsors are Royal Caribbean International, United Airlines, Schlitterbahn Waterparks, the Texas State Aquarium, the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Houston Zoo.

For more information on the Treasures of the Texas Coast Children's Art Contest, please contact the General Land Office at 1.877.TXCOAST or visit [www.texasadoptabeach.org](http://www.texasadoptabeach.org).

## Congratulations to the 2014 Children's Art Contest Winners!

### Grade 6

**Edgar Cazares**  
Brownsville

**Trinity Pace**  
Sugarland

**Katie Saddler**  
Victoria

**James Langerman**  
McGregor

**Gianna Scillieri**  
Houston

**Rachel Ward**  
Victoria

**Ellie DiPaolo**  
Houston

**Christian de los Santos**  
San Antonio

**Alison Duncan**  
Portland

**Ellie Salim**  
Houston

### Grade 5

**Jordan Gerling**  
Honey Grove

**Jude Fuselier**  
Orange

**Mishika Govil**  
Flower Mound

**Priscila Cobos**  
Mission

**Dayne Seay**  
Orange

**Katia Ospina**  
Arlington

**Donovan Graves**  
Dallas

**Haily Malagarie**  
Lockhart

**Elaina Lee**  
Victoria

**Emily Chandler**  
Victoria

### Grades 3 & 4

**Fatima Lopez**  
Conroe

**Lilly Loreda**  
Houston

**Camryn Petru**  
Victoria

**Lynley Pace**  
Sugarland

**Kate Letsinger**  
Victoria

**Miakoda Nutt**  
San Antonio

**Lauren Theriot**  
Victoria

**Cray Dockery**  
Whitharral

**Leo Saenz**  
Bishop

**Isabella Segura**  
Driscoll

### Grades K, 1 & 2

**Kevin Corpuz**  
Victoria

**Reed Ingersoll**  
Houston

**Anthony J. Magaña**  
Houston

**Ethan Lara**  
Victoria

**Wesley Kwan**  
Austin

**Tarini Gupta**  
Irving

**John Ward**  
Victoria

**Genesis Pineda**  
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**Kaylen Smith**  
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**Ivan Stover**  
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## Agency Newsletters

Veterans Voice

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/\\_publications/veterans-voice-spring-2014.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/_publications/veterans-voice-spring-2014.pdf)

On the Coast

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/on-the-coast-spring-2011.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/on-the-coast-spring-2011.pdf)

The Responder

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/responder-march-2014.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/responder-march-2014.pdf)

Saving Texas History

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/\\_publications/STH-newsletter-spring-2014.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/_publications/STH-newsletter-spring-2014.pdf)

Cabin Connection

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/cabin-connection-05-13.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/cabin-connection-05-13.pdf)

Adopt-A-Beach

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/aab-newsletter-spring2014.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/aab-newsletter-spring2014.pdf)

Voices of Veterans

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/\\_publications/vov-newsletter-spring-2014.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/_publications/vov-newsletter-spring-2014.pdf)

## Please give us your feedback

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